



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE SPECIAL AGENT SELECTED FOR NATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AWARD

-- Agent is the 7th ICE employee to be recognized in past 3 months for anti-counterfeiting efforts --

NEW YORK, N.Y.-- At a ceremony today in Manhattan, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) awarded U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special Agent Yong Chin its Intellectual Property Excellence Award for his role in dismantling criminal organizations responsible for distributing tens of thousands of counterfeit Viagra tablets.

PhRMA selected Special Agent Chin for the award because of his exemplary enforcement record in combating the smuggling and distribution of counterfeit pharmaceutical products. In 2002 and 2003, Special Agent Chin spearheaded several investigations in the Los Angeles area that led to the seizure of more than 30,000 counterfeit Viagra tablets, as well as the arrest and conviction of key figures responsible for this criminal activity.

Special Agent Chin is currently based in Washington, D.C. at the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Coordination Center, where he plays a critical role in helping to oversee ICE investigations around the country that target IPR violators. Previously, Special Agent Chin served in Los Angeles, where he was the first ICE agent in Los Angeles to initiate, investigate, and secure federal prosecutions for the sale of counterfeit pharmaceutical products. Special Agent Chin joined the former U.S. Customs Service (now ICE) in 2000, after a distinguished 10-year career with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Special Agent Chin is the seventh ICE agent to be recognized at the national level in the past three months for his anti-counterfeiting efforts. In November 2004, the Department of Justice awarded six other ICE agents for their role in targeting a global network of cyberspace gangs responsible for pirating billions of dollars worth of software over the Internet. This 15-month undercover ICE investigation, known as "Operation Buccaneer," has been widely recognized as one of the largest Internet copyright investigations ever conducted.

In recent years, IPR violations have grown in magnitude and complexity, costing U.S. businesses billions of dollars in lost revenue annually, and at the same time, often posing health and safety risks to U.S. consumers. In 1998, the International Chamber of Commerce estimated that counterfeit goods constituted five to seven percent of the world trade, a market worth \$350 billion.

The Department of Homeland Security plays a key role in seizing counterfeit goods and prosecuting those responsible for producing, smuggling, and distributing these products. In Fiscal Year 2004, agencies within

the Department seized more than \$138 million worth of counterfeit goods, up from \$94 million the prior fiscal year. At the same time, ICE agents arrested 218 individuals and brought 140 indictments for IPR violations in FY 2004, up from 132 arrests and 70 indictments the prior fiscal year.

Some of the investigative successes achieved by Special Agent Chin that led to his award nomination include:

- **Frank Huang Investigation** – Agent Chin, with the assistance of agents with the Food and Drug Administration, spearheaded an investigation that identified Huang as a domestic producer of counterfeit Viagra. Huang was also identified as the recipient of 10,848 counterfeit Viagra tablets that were mailed to him from an international address. As a result of Agent Chin’s investigation, Huang was arrested in August 2004 and charged with conspiracy, trafficking in counterfeit goods and the illegal sale of a counterfeit drug with the intent to defraud or mislead.
- **Mohamed Mahmoud Investigation** – Agent Chin, along with detectives from the Health Advisory Law Enforcement Task Force conducted a controlled delivery of 3,000 counterfeit Viagra tablets in the Los Angeles Area. After delivering the counterfeit tablets, Mahmoud was arrested as the subject who received the counterfeit drugs. In June 2003, Mahmoud plead guilty to charges violating California State Penal Code 350(a)(1) and (2) and was sentenced to 180 days in jail and three years of supervised probation.
- **Khoa Do Investigation** – Agent Chin initiated an investigation after two international parcels from China were intercepted in Alaska containing a total of 16,400 counterfeit Viagra tablets. Agent Chin traced the packages to their intended recipients and secured federal search warrants for multiple locations in Los Angeles. Agent Chin subsequently arrested Khoa Do, aka Chris Do, as the recipient of the counterfeit products. In June 2004, Do pleaded guilty to trafficking in counterfeit goods and holding for sale or dispensing a counterfeit drug.

“In many cases, the illicit profits earned by criminal organizations from the distribution of counterfeit goods are used to promote additional criminal enterprises, such as the trafficking of drugs, weapons, or other contraband,” said Special Agent Chin. “Our goal is to dismantle these criminal organizations and stop the stream of counterfeit goods from entering the United States.”

Gary White, chief of ICE’s Commercial Fraud Unit, added, “IPR violations can take many forms and may involve health and safety concerns. Counterfeit pharmaceuticals, tools, electrical cords, and aircraft or automobile parts all have a significant impact on public safety. Agent Chin’s standards of professional excellence, coupled with years of experience and keen investigative instincts, have resulted in significant IPR seizures and arrests. We are very proud of Agent Chin and the IPR unit.”

As the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, ICE is charged with identifying, targeting, and eliminating systemic vulnerabilities in the financial, commercial, trade, manufacturing, and transportation sectors that could be exploited by criminal and terrorist organizations.

Agent Chin will share this honor at the Essex House Hotel in New York City, NY with Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, U.S. Embassy Beirut; Ambassador John Hamilton, U.S. Embassy Guatemala; and Mr. Amer Kayani, Senior Commercial Officer, U.S. Embassy Ankara, Turkey.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.